

were prophets and preachers of various sorts, but the government of the churches was entirely by the local elders. Now the question comes "Did the apostles who ruled the whole church have successors?" If not, then we have no universal government, but simply the local government by elders. It is on the assumption that the apostles had successors that Rome has built her colossal organization. With the additional assumption that Peter was ruler over the other apostles, it was easy to establish a world-wide hierarchy with the Pope at its head.

As to Peter being ruler over the other apostles, there is not the slightest hint of it in the New Testament. He was prominent among them, and is named first in all the lists, but there is not a single mention of his rule. The passage depended upon for Peter's supremacy is that of Matt. xvi: 18, 19: "Thou art Peter (Cepha), and upon this rock (Cepha) I will build my church; and the gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The only apparently distinctive gifts to Peter in this charge of our Lord are (1) that the church should be built on him (for in the Aramaic, which doubtless our Lord spoke, "Peter" and "rock" are precisely the same word), and (2) that he should have the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The binding and loosing were given equally to the other apostles. (See ch. xviii: 18.) The building of the church on Peter cannot mean that Peter was to be its head or lord. In Ephesians, ch. ii: 20, we find that the church is built on the apostles and prophets (comp. Eph. iii: 5), and the context there very clearly shows us that the inspired teachings of these apostles and prophets are the foundations alluded to. We must use the same interpretation here in our Lord's charge to Peter. He was to be the foundation of the church in common with his fellow-apostles and prophets as inspired teachers. We have now left as belonging to Peter only the gift of the keys. The Roman Church maintains that the keys represent all authority. But we have seen that the authority of teaching, and thus being the foundation of the church, and the authority of binding and loosing were given equally to all the apostles. Hence Peter did *not* have all the authority, and we must seek another definition for the keys. We may readily find it in that which follows, the keys representing the power to bind and loose, phrases which in the Jewish phraseology refer to the laying down of the law either in injunction or exception. (See Lightfoot *in loco*.) In this case the keys are appropriate as opening the door of duty and shutting the door of prohibition. Or we may view the keys as having a historical meaning, and referring to Peter's opening the door of the church, first to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and